



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3331

Subject: Supporting Watershed Partnerships

**Sec. 1 Purpose.** This Order recognizes diverse stakeholder partnerships that use a comprehensive watershed approach to resource stewardship. In recognition of its strong watershed partnerships and accomplishments in watershed stewardship, this Order maintains the designation of the Connecticut River as a National Blueway. This Order also affirms the Department of the Interior's (Department) commitment to supporting regionally or nationally significant rivers, their watersheds, and community-based watershed partnerships.

**Sec. 2 Background.** Rivers play a vital role in connecting Americans with the lands and waters that provide economic, recreational, social, cultural, and ecological value to their communities. Healthy rivers are integral to the quality of life for all Americans and their communities. Resilient rivers and watersheds are essential sources of clean water supplies for rural, agricultural, and urban communities alike. Rivers provide important habitat for fish and wildlife species and act as corridors for their migration and dispersal, providing ecosystem connectivity that supports resilience to environmental change. Rivers support our recreation and tourism economy by providing opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking, camping, swimming, and numerous other activities. Rivers offer a focal point for environmental education and outreach that helps communities understand and connect with the great outdoors.

On May 24, 2012, Secretary's Order 3321, established the National Blueways System to recognize and support locally-led efforts to sustain the economic, recreational, and natural values of rivers and watersheds of national significance. The National Blueways System was a voluntary recognition program intended to highlight and support successful collaborative strategies for sustainable river and watershed resources led by diverse stakeholder organizations. Secretary's Order 3321 also designated the Connecticut River as a Model National Blueway in recognition of the diverse partnerships that were developed to sustain the economic, recreational, and natural values of the Connecticut River watershed.

**Sec. 3 Authorities.**

a) This Order is issued in accordance with authority provided under the Take Pride in America Act, Public Law 101-628; the Outdoor Recreation Act, Public Law 87-714; and the Cooperative Watershed Management Program of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Public Law 111-11.

b) The bureaus within the Department have a broad panoply of legal authority to carry out their respective missions that support enhancing river recreation, undertaking river restoration, and pursuing river protection initiatives to pass on healthy rivers to future generations. These authorities include: the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.; the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956,



16 U.S.C. 742 et seq.; the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.; the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.; the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287; the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S.C. 1702 et seq.; the Reclamation Act, Public Law 57-161; the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Public Law 111-11; and the National Trails System Act of 1968, 16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.

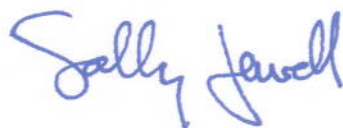
**Sec. 4 Dissolution of the National Blueways System and Committee.** The National Blueways System and the National Blueways Committee are dissolved. This Order supersedes Secretary's Order 3321 Establishment of a National Blueways System, dated May 24, 2012.

**Sec. 5 Connecticut River Blueway Designation.** In light of its successful designation, on-the-ground accomplishments, and ongoing, broad support, I hereby reaffirm the designation of the Connecticut River and Watershed as a National Blueway. The Connecticut River Watershed exemplifies coordinated stewardship of a river and its watershed with diverse partnerships of interested communities including over 40 partner organizations, protection of over 2 million acres of habitat, environmental and educational efforts aimed at urban and rural populations, and recreational access to the river, its tributaries, and public lands. The Department is committed to promoting best practices, sharing information and resources, and encouraging active and collaborative stewardship of the Connecticut River and Watershed.

**Sec. 6 Support for Watershed Partnerships.** Across the Nation, communities and stakeholders have formed partnerships focused on stewardship and sustainability of rivers and their watersheds. When these partnerships work successfully across Federal agencies, with state, local, and tribal governments, and with non-profit organizations, private landowners, and businesses, they are able to accomplish their shared stewardship and conservation objectives. When sought by local communities and stakeholders, Federal agency coordination in support of river systems will inspire and help stakeholders to plan and manage for the resiliency and connectivity of their rivers, to seek cooperation and collaboration among communities and across jurisdictions, and to strive for an integrative, adaptive approach for sustaining the whole river system. The Department is committed to supporting regionally or nationally significant rivers, their watersheds and community-based watershed partnerships.

**Sec. 7 Effect of the Order.** Nothing in this Order is intended to authorize or affect the use of private property. Nothing in this Order is intended to be the basis for the exercise of any new regulatory authority, nor shall this initiative or any designation pursuant to this Order affect or interfere with any Federal, state, local, and tribal government jurisdiction or applicable law including interstate compacts relating to water or the laws of any state or tribe relating to the control, appropriation, use or distribution of water or water rights. Furthermore, nothing in this Order shall be interpreted as amending, revising, or modifying either Executive Order 13061 of September 11, 1997, entitled "Federal Support of Community Efforts Along American Heritage Rivers" or Secretary's Order 3319, dated February 29, 2012, entitled "Establishment of a National Water Trails System."

Sec. 8 **Expiration Date.** This Order is effective immediately. It shall remain in effect until its provisions are converted to the Departmental Manual or until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever comes first.



Secretary of the Interior

Date: **JAN 03 2014**